

Message Text

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PAGE 01 DAMASC 00405 231641Z

53

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P R 231600Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5981

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 405

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SY

SUBJ: PROPOSED MEETING WITH OSMA SABBE

REF: DAMASCUS 288, STATE 12773

1. EMBOFF MET WITH SYRIAN INTERMEDIARY TO SABBE
JAN 21. INTERMEDIARY, WHO IS ALAWITE LAWYER WITH
EXCELLENT BAATHI, PALESTINIAN AND ERITREAN
CONNECTIONS, SEEMED PLEASED WITH REQUEST AND PROMISED TO
CONTACT SABBE SAME AFTERNOON. HE TOLD EMBOFF THAT SABBE
WOULD CONTACT HIM BY PHONE EITHER AT EMBASSY OR
AT HOME. AFTER WAITING UNTIL LATER AFTERNOON JAN 22,
CALLED LAWYER AND TOLD HIM WE STILL AWAITING SABBE'S
CALL. HE SEEMED SURPRISED, SAID HE HAD PASSED
MESSAGE AND THAT SABBE HAD INDICATED HE WOULD CONTACT
EMBOFF. SAID HE MEETING WITH SABBE SAME EVENING AND
WOULD FIND OUT WHAT CAUSING DELAY. LAWYER UNAVAILABLE
JAN 23.

2. WE NOT CERTAIN WHAT PROBLEM IS BUT WE NOTE THAT
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AFTERNOON JAN 21 SABBE INVOLVED IN PRESS CONFERENCE

DURING WHICH THREE PROMINENT DEFECTORS TO ERITREAN
CAUSE INTERVIEWED BY ARAB AND FOREIGN PRESS CORRESPONDENTS.
ALSO IN ATTENDANCE WERE ERITREAN REPS. FROM CAIRO
AND SOMALIA. JAN 22 ELF LEADER AHMAD NASSIR MET
WITH BAATH NATIONAL COMMAND FOREIGN RELATIONS
DIRECTOR FAWWAZ SAYYAGH. IT SEEMS THAT SABBE BUSY
WITH INTERNAL ERITREAN MATTERS WHICH MAY PARTIALLY
EXPLAIN DELAY IN ARRANGING MEETING.
MURPHY

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NNN

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